VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2014 - 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

SESSION NOTES:

Committee Objective

The purpose of the VRS Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Committee is to provide strategic advice and consultation to DEED/VRS on topics and issues affecting the mutual provision of DEED/VRS and CRP/LUV services to Minnesotans with disabilities. Our efforts to understand issues and to work collaboratively will build and nurture the capacity of Minnesota's rehabilitation community to advance the employment, independent living and community integration of Minnesotans with disabilities.

Specifically, the VRS Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Committee will:

- Represent the perspectives and interests of CRP/LUVs in advancing rehabilitation and employment issues while fostering dialogue and engagement on critical issues throughout the greater rehabilitation community
- Promote innovative service practices to accelerate the adoption of best practices at a systems level that fosters equitable access to quality services on a statewide basis
- Provide strategic level advice and consultation to DEED/VRS on matters affecting CRP/LUVs
- Identify key topics and issues affecting CRP/LUVs and DEED/VRS
- Consider input from subject matter experts in issues affecting economic development, state demographics / population trends, and promising practices
- Engage in active reflection, spirited discussion and strategic dialogue on critical topics affecting CRP/LUVs and DEED/VRS services to persons with disabilities in Minnesota
- Provide a forum for the review and discussion of critical VRS and CRP service delivery topics including, but not limited to: current service delivery practices; new and emerging service needs; identifying best practices; and the consideration of statewide service needs and resources

2014 Community Partner Members (listed alphabetically): Becky Bazzarre, Laura Bealey, Gil Bessard, Steve Brink, Heather Deutschlaender, Jeremy Gurney, Josh Howie, Amanda Jensen-Stahl, Dan Meyers, Julie Peterschick, Rachel Praught, and Robert Reedy

VRS Members: Jay Hancock, Becky Johnson, Lori Thorpe, and Kris Tone

Sponsor: Kim Peck, VRS Director

Co-leaders: Chris McVey and Jan Thompson

Facilitator: Holly Johnson

2014 Schedule: Jan 24, Mar 28, Apr 25, Jun 27, Sep 26, Oct 24, and Dec 5.

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April 25, 2014 Session Objectives:

- * Advisory discussion on VRS and CRP experiences and initial observations regarding the new DISCOVERY Process after a little over a year since its January 2013 strategic topic introduction with the committee.
- Provide a conduit for sharing relevant, important and timely updates and information for the benefit of vocational rehabilitation community and consumers

April 25 2014 Attendees (*listed alphabetically*): Becky Bazzarre, Laura Bealey, Gil Bessard, Steve Brink, Heather Deutschlaender, Jeremy Gurney, Jay Hancock, Josh Howie, Amanda Jensen-Stahl, Becky Johnson, Dan Meyers, Chris McVey, Kim Peck, Julie Peterschick, Rachel Praught, Robert Reedy, Jan Thompson, and Lori Thorpe

Not in attendance: Kris Tone

Guest presenters: John Fisher, Abbie Wells Herzog, Alyssa Klein, Steve Scholl,

Jim Leibert

Facilitator: Holly Johnson

Agenda Topics:

- 1. Welcome / Overview
- 2. Vocational Rehabilitation Community Topics
- 3. Strategic Advisory Topic Part I: DISCOVERY Process One Year Check-in
 - Overview of VRS qualitative and quantitative experience with DISCOVERY
 - ii. Q&A / Discussion
- 4. VR Community Success Story April Storyteller Jeremy Gurney
- 5. Strategic Advisory Topic Part II: DISCOVERY Process One Year Check-in
 - iii. Overview of CRP qualitative and quantitative experiences with DISCOVERY
 - iv. Q&A / Discussion
 - v. Overall Observations and Potential Next Steps for DISCOVERY Process in Minnesota
- 6. Wrap Up/Adjourn

Meeting Highlights:

- The committee discussed qualitative and quantitative experiences to date with the DISCOVERY process in Minnesota
- The committee developed overall observations and potential next steps for further evaluation of effective use of the DISCOVERY model of services in Minnesota

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Next Steps:

- DOCUMENT SESSION NOTES: Documentation and communication of session notes for key audiences including committee, VRS, and CRP/LUV partners.
- OLMSTEAD PLAN DIRECTIVES: VRS will develop draft language on VRS purchased services for CRP Advisory review at June 27th meeting.
- VR SYSTEM COMMUNICATION PROPOSAL: John Fisher will work with the VRS Community Outreach Team to develop a proposal for a one stop online resource for Minnesota's Vocational Rehabilitation Services to be presented to the CRP Advisory Committee for review and endorsement.
- **JUNE STORYTELLER:** Julie Peterschick with Robert Reedy as backup pending vacation confirmation.
- NEXT MEETING: Next meeting is Friday, June 27th. No meeting in May.

Welcome and Opening

The committee approved the March 28, 2014 session notes. Signatures from members unable to attend the March meeting were added to the 2014 VRS CRP Advisory Committee charter.

Vocational Rehabilitation Community Topics

❖ CRP updates:

- Steve Brink
 - Fidelity meetings for Tran\$em are ramping up
 - Local partnership meetings are working well and occurring about every other month, rotating locations. The partnership meetings are fostering greater collaboration of placement professionals with leads and candidates
- Heather Deutschlaender
 - ProAct is implementing a training grant for about 140 employees over
 18 months. LEAN process training and applications.
- Gil Bessard
 - Tasks Unlimited has hired a new business manager working on business development including state related

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Laura Bealey

- o MRCI Mankato new facility should be done in July
- Organizational restructuring underway
- Meeting with Blue Earth and Nicollet counties; getting pushback from the counties on moving people from center based service. Discussed Olmstead Plan timelines.
- IPS work is underway. MRCI has rehabilitated an old college building and leased second floor in Mankato for additional space.
- The South Metro Placement Partnership is hosting a Mankato area job fair that will feature 22 employers on May 1st

Robert Reedy

- IPS projects are active at RISE, Incorporated
- Fidelity visit preparations underway
- Reconciliation process going on during the same month as audit. Very painful and time intensive process impacting accounting department for a month.
- Received a new DHS expansion grant to provide placement services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers as well as those with intellectual disabilities. Anticipate serving about 25 individuals over the grant period.

Jeremy Gurney

- Opportunity Services has CARF review in July. Cumbersome to manage across 11 offices in Minnesota and three in Florida across diverse locations encompassing 10+ counties in those two states.
- Transition season is growing given school to work cycle
- Working with Becky Johnson, VRS on Project Search at Medtronic.
 Excited to have first hire at headquarters.

Amanda Jensen-Stahl

- Goodwill Easter Seals will host their big annual fundraiser 'Power of Work' on May 1st at the St Paul Hotel. The event provides an opportunity to share an overview of services with the community.
- The Green Line is working on connecting people with jobs in their community.

Julie Peterschick

 Productive Alternatives IPS training was held in April and they are currently immersed in implementing

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Exciting regional activity is occurring based on responding to an employer need/opportunity in the area. Perham MN is looking for about 200 people for an employer. Several counties have come together and are chipping in to fund transportation solutions to draw talent from outlying communities to meet the need. The opportunity includes foreign exchange work positions. As part of the regional partnership, the employer will provide the option to carve out jobs. Productive Alternatives estimates there will be positions for about 10 FTEs with 1/3 to 1/2 of bus riderships from their organizations. Most will be factory and manufacturing jobs. Multiple employers are involved. The primary employer creating this regional response is KLN. The committee talked about recognition for employers providing jobs for the area.

Becky Bazarre

- Lifetrack Resources has hired three new staff who are focused on placement, coaching and long term follow-up
- She noted that Lifetrack is an Extended Employment provider and offered assistance if other providers need longer term supported employment

Rachel Praught

- Functional Industries Inc. completed their CARF review and are now working on fiscal reconciliation
- Participated in Moving Home MN training
- Looking at our Extended Employment funds and shifting to all community support

Dan Meyers

- Opportunity Partners has CARF in August and September.
- Has received a few referrals for DISCOVERY

Josh Howie

- Trillium Works! is experiencing a high volume of referrals from schools. Duluth has a 4.5% unemployment rate which is super low.
- The Carlton County Area Placement Team is ramping up and have met twice now. The initial meeting received a lot of interest and was held at the Cloquet Hospital.
- Excited about May 7th HUGE job fair with 95 businesses expected.
 Event will be held at the hockey arena known as 'The DEC'.

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❖ DEED/VRS updates:

- Kim Peck, State VRS Director
 - WIA reauthorization work continues. Connie Garner, former. policy advisor to the late Senator Ted Kennedy is a working closely with CSAVR. House and Senate are pre-conferencing the differences between the two bills to reconcile into one bill. If passed, the bill will move to the President for signatures. Efforts are being made to address challenging language related to proposed Senate 1356 section 511 that would put VR in role of the 'gate keeper' to determine that individual cannot qualify for competitive employment before they can qualify for sheltered employment. Concerns are related primarily to the tremendous amount of resources this responsibility will require to deliver. Other concerns with the draft bills include the proposed downgrading of qualifications for rehabilitation professionals. VRS has concerns that needs for serving people with disabilities have unique aspects that might be compromised by downgrading the qualifications for vocational counselors.
 - 2. DEED Deputy Commissioner Cynthia Bauerly has accepted a position in the Department of Revenue effective next Monday. Her Deputy position is the one that VRS reports in to and that represents the Sub Cabinet for DEED on the Olmstead Plan. Kim has been asked to fill the Sub Cabinet role during the interim while a new Deputy is sought. Kim shared with the committee that she has greatly appreciated Bauerly's focus on who VRS and the vocational rehabilitation community in Minnesota serves and how best to serve.
 - 3. Olmstead Sub Cabinet. The new Executive Director for the Minnesota Olmstead Implementation Office is Dr. Darlene Zengara from South Dakota. Dr. Zengara's background includes system change and advocacy. The office will temporarily be housed within DEED. Decision making is challenging given the eight different agencies who are involved with the Olmstead work. Committee members voiced concerns that there are still counties unaware of the content and directives contained within the Olmstead Plan.
 - 4. The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is conducting a Public Forum on the afternoon of June 25th in Duluth on IPS and Work as a part of recovery.

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Jan Thompson, VRS Field Director

Updates on Minnesota's VR Community program status and outcomes: Both activity and outcomes are coming in strong.

- 1. Our employment outcomes goal for Federal Fiscal Year 2014 is 2,763 statewide. So far we are at 1,821.
- 2. Average wage is \$11.03 per hour.
- 3. The closed categories waiting list is currently at 538 people which historically tends to impact employment outcomes two to three years down the line.
- 4. Large transition youth caseload levels continue.
- Chris McVey, VRS Director of Strategic Initiatives & Partnerships
 - 1. Minnesota is one of three states selected for an RSA grant through the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) through University of Massachusetts-Boston called the SGA (Substantial Gainful Activity) project. The grant focuses on assisting individuals receiving SSDI benefits get connected rapidly to VR services and quickly connect with business engagement labor market information related to their vocational goal and financial/benefits counseling VRS will be meeting with ICI on May 5-6. Individuals in the study group will work closely with a counselor and then move into a plan guickly within 30 days of application for VRS. The approach leverages both Motivational Interviewing and rapid engagement practices. Chris sees the potential for important connections to placement specialists whether it be VRS or CRP to assist individuals in understanding the local labor markets, etc. as essential and occurring prior to development of the employment plan. The grant is also designed to result in a product from the project. Study areas will be determined after ICI staff is on the ground to help determine which sites are most suitable for the work.
 - 2. There continues to be high levels of strategic work being done by specialist teams including Next Generation Placement pilots and supporting the statewide network of local Placement partnerships (currently at15 statewide). We have created a list of the active partnerships which includes a wide range of partnership process maturity and unique local factors. Some of the local placement partnerships have coordinated career fairs, others have planned and implemented industry panels in which hiring managers from various industries share key career development and hiring strategies with VR community staff. All of these placement partnerships are doing great work engaging

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employers as a placement partnership and, as a result have increased hiring of qualified VRS consumers. Question raised: how can we better connect the pools of candidates with the pools of employers? Next Monday, Kathy West-Evans from the National Employment Team (NET) and Kristopher Corso are coming to demo the TAP (Talent Acquisition Portal). VRS has invited regional state colleagues, including North Dakota and lowa to attend the training in Minnesota.

- Jay Hancock, VRS Southern Regional Manager
 - 1. On April 30th the Rochester partnership will offer their annual job fair with over 100 employers expected. The event is becoming very successful and is getting larger each year as employers hear and join.
- John Fisher, VRS Director of Public Affairs
 - 1. Reporting back on the update from the VRS Community Outreach Team. Three assignments from last time:
 - Archive & organize materials that already exist and as they are created for accessible resources by the full community
 - Created a 'SharePoint' site to gather materials and Community Outreach Team members will begin loading their materials. The archive will help us comply with Olmstead Plan implementation requirements
 - Create a system wide website that would be a type of portal to the range of work that we're all doing.
 - team met since last time to discuss how would we manage and organize a site and fund the requests
 - we have talked to a few web providers and designers. many questions around how to scope and build it
 - John spoke with Laura Winge, Creative Director at DEED, about potentially carving out some 'real estate' on the DEED website and build something for the VR community on the existing architecture. Laura offered some potential encouragement and possibility for adding such a site that would still be able to look and feel different than DEED.
 Ballpark estimate \$10K. John will look into this possibility further.

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- MN.Gov has a portal under Social Services banner that has a disability section that might be leveraged and expanded as a possibility.
- John said the VRS Community Outreach Team should be prepared to bring more of a proposal to CRP at the June meeting
- Create a system wide video
 - This is the most problematic of three options from the perspective of the team with fundamental questions around for who, what message, and determining clearly what do we want to say.
 - John spoke with Bill Hanley, TPT Vice President, to see if we could partner as part of their public service mission. There is genuine potential to build a statewide package that could be used for years noting the example of 'Independence to Inclusion' show that recently aired which included creating a web presence, video capacity, production of a 30 minute documentary with 2 min and 30 sec snippets - all part of contract for approximately \$150K investment. John will continue to explore possible projects.
- John made two requests of the VRS CRP Advisory Committee on behalf of the VRS Community Outreach Team:
 - The VRS Community Outreach Team needs 2-3 more members on the team - who else can participate? Looking for members with Marketing/Communications/PR roles and background
 - 2. Please start laying the groundwork for funding requests from broader community of CRPs. We will start with member organizations of this committee and then go broader.

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Strategic Advisory Topic Part I: DISCOVERY Process One Year Check-In

VRS Director Kim Peck began the dialogue with an introduction of VRS Director of Program and Service Quality Jim Leibert and Rehabilitation Specialist Steve Scholl. Jim and his staff are reviewing the VRS data for services and building in an evaluation component for service management and improvement purposes.

In an effort to move beyond the purely anecdotal to the research level, Kim asked Jim and Steve to review what the early data on DISCOVERY is showing us thus far. Steve has been working with Abbie Wells Herzog (VRS Autism Specialist) and Alyssa Klein (VRS Transition Youth Specialist) on establishing the VRS DISCOVERY approach and payment process. In preparation for the research into DISCOVERY, Steve first attended a training session and then shadowed a VR professional as they worked with a few clients who were using the DISCOVERY process. Steve & Abbie have begun work to create an assessment tool for DISCOVERY that can be used for interviewing as well as conducting survey and focus groups for follow-up questions.

Next, Steve distributed a handout of the VRS comparison of cost of assessment of DISCOVERY to "Not DISCOVERY" assessment costs for FFY13. Committee members asked for detail on what all is included within the 'Not Discovery' cases which Steve said they would have to dig into further for fuller explanation. The initial cost comparison is composed of 105 DISCOVERY cases to 1,679 other cases for Assessment services. The small sample indicates a minimal difference in average costs: \$1,431.82 for DISCOVERY compared \$1,380.84 for 'Not DISCOVERY'. The information should be not be overly weighted since as of the reporting, only three cases have completed/successful closure. Coding is a big issue. Additional early data shows for comparison cost for placement services as follows: 34 DISCOVERY cases compared to 2,954 Not DISCOVERY yielded \$1,508.82 DISCOVERY cost for placement services compared to \$1,912.15 Not DISCOVERY.

In an effort to gather input from VRS Counselor experiences with DISCOVERY, Abbie sent an email out to all the counselors in the state and heard back from 20. Of those responding, the numbers are split between some using DISCOVERY Process with consumers while others were choosing not to based on what they are seeing. Abbie summarized the counselor inputs as follows:

Pros: DISCOVERY appears to be a 'more in depth process'... some
consumers are getting more out of it, it can be helpful for clients with
Autism where other traditional approaches have not worked, counselors
are getting good feedback from the families, have experienced a small
number of successful closures at this point.

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• Cons: the two major complaints are that DISCOVERY is very expensive and takes 'too long'. Counselors report losing some job seekers during process of assessment because it's taking too long e.g. 5 months. Some counselors express concerns about a lack of communication from a CRP provider during the process and in some cases question whether more hours are being requested than they believed were needed. Counselors also noted that how well DISCOVERY cases go seems to depend on if the CRP is newer to doing DISCOVERY (goes better) or if the staff is new to DISCOVERY. The level of training can be a good indicator. Counselors also noted that in addition to the staff providing the services, a great deal depends on the person receiving the services. DISCOVERY works well for some and not for others.

Steve Scholl also spoke with staff at some participating CRPs and heard that it typically seems to take about a year to get up to speed on the process; with staff turnover it makes this a difficult process to have and retain qualified staff. For some clients on the autism spectrum having the assessment conducted during a home visit seemed to measurably reduce the anxiety level as compared to holding the assessment in an office. Steve distributed a draft assessment survey and asked the committee for input on its format and content.

DISCOVERY Process One Year Check-in Observations:

- The actual numbers for DISCOVERY case services are still pretty small, only about 10% of total cases
- We know that current tools for Autism assessment do not work well so we've been interested in exploring how DISCOVERY might work for consumers on the spectrum.
- VRS is concerned that many counties are asking providers to provide this service without asking for the data and evidence that the process is effective and for whom it is effective. Balancing high demands for services with limited resources, VRS takes seriously the responsibility on where to best invest funds for case services and looks for evidence based practices wherever possible while still being open to innovation in practice development.
- VRS is focused on bringing rigor and discipline to the conversation and decision making/funding for case services dollars.
- MN has separated DISCOVERY Assessment as a service from the rest of the process once work moves to using DISCOVERY Placement/Customized Employment.
- Both VRS and CRPs are concerned about the high number of resource hours that this process tends to consume and if there is a business model that can support its effective use for consumer outcomes. There appears

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to be no evidence based outcome research to support the model despite a number of states adoption of the process.

- VRS will continue to track the case information for DISCOVERY with high interest in understanding how DISCOVERY impacts the employment outcomes and retention over the longer term.
- One of our goals in holding the check-in conversation is to gain committee insights on what we, as a vocational rehabilitation community need to better understand about DISCOVERY and how we can help customers to be informed about how various services are correlated with employment outcome yield.

* Committee member Jeremy Gurney provided the April VR community partnership success story:

Jeremy shared the story of an enclave of consumers who are now working within a team of six as part of a local Walmart workforce. Jeremy talked about how Opportunity Services worked with the store manager to develop the work positions and shared stories of how they are cross training within the small team to be able to fill in for each other when needed. So far Walmart has been happy with the work performance and record for these individuals. Committee members inquired about how Opportunity Services successfully worked with the retailer to create the consumer job opportunities in hopes of using as a positive example with other local store managers across the state.

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Strategic Advisory Topic Part II: DISCOVERY Process One Year Check-In

The focus of the afternoon dialogue was on hearing provider perspectives regarding their qualitative and quantitative experiences with the DISCOVERY process to date.

Heather Deutschlaender shared that ProAct was an earlier adopter of the process given the high level of county interest and started offering DISCOVERY at the end of 2012. The initial trained staff left after a short period which resulted in a delay with starting up again. ProAct's experience to date is that 58% of cases result in an employment outcome. Over those securing employment, 86% are still in job; 41% left their jobs due to motivation challenges, one individual moved, and one individual is still in the program. wondering about both training going forward. ProAct has worked with 12 individuals using the DISCOVERY process. ProAct currently has 2-3 staff focused on DISCOVERY with 3-4 other types of cases included with their caseloads. Heather consulted with staff on their experiences both pros and cons which are summarized as follows:

- Pros: Have used DISCOVERY across a very broad range well beyond just consumers on the Spectrum and including transition youth and mental health cases. Staff note that the DISCOVERY assessment is a great way to learn a great deal and help consumers learn more about their interests and strengths. It is also a great tool to confirm a strength when in doubt. Some consumers have secured employment during the assessment phase e.g. hardware shop visit. In situations where consumers are unable to express themselves, interviewing with the families was helpful addition to gain information. Informational interviews have been easier to secure outside the metro e.g. Forest Lake easier than metro. Staff also said the DISCOVERY was a good option for those struggling with PBA as it provided more direction and attention. They also appreciated counties which have hosted providers meetings to talk about cases and provide support.
- Cons: Some individuals do not want you in their homes and/or talking to people as part of their employment search. Given the time intensity and duration of DISCOVERY, staff have lower case numbers. Staff also talked about the highs and lows associated with using DISCOVERY with consumers with mental health issues where individual commitment levels can be low. Staff did not encounter as many 'happy surprises' in the process as the 'sword making' position examples in the training had inspired them to expect. They also noted that how the model is used and interpreted varies by provider making it challenging to have a consistent expectation and experience around DISCOVERY.

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Laura Bealey of MRCI Mankato shared that their organization started with DISCOVERY in Sept 2013. To date three individuals have been served using the process. Of the three: one completed DISCOVERY and is in the PBA stage, one walked off the job and is receiving work adjustment training, and the third is a new referral. Laura observed that it is difficult to distinguish what would have come out with, versus without, DISCOVERY. MRCI is looking at DISCOVERY as 'another tool for the toolbox' and continuing to explore its value. Like many on the committee, she shared that a lot of emphasis and attention has been given to the process in a short period with very limited data available to validate its population and outcomes viability.

Rachel Praught of Functional Industries shared that she recently received the deeper levels of training and thinks that is helpful and important to implementing DISCOVERY. To date, Functional Industries has embarked on one DISCOVERY case. The consumer asked for DISCOVERY as a way to learn more about herself and then it fell apart. She ended up coming back in through the traditional assessment. Their county does not currently fund DISCOVERY.

Josh Howie of Trillium Works! shared that their organization does not use the DISCOVERY Process and nor does it have plans to add it. Josh said their organization has reviewed DISCOVERY compared to their own existing approaches and found that their current processes are working very well for both staff and consumers. He noted that Trillium's model is firmly based in the following values: we provide 'person-centered' services. we truly listen to people, we identify strengths and we get there sooner.

Robert Reedy of RISE, Incorporated shared that their organization finds DISCOVERY to be very prescriptive without data to support the prescription. He contrasted DISCOVERY with IPS. IPS involves compliance with a defined model with evidence based research supporting its prescription. He said that while there is a great spirit to DISCOVERY, the prescription comes without evidence to support it which does not meet the same professional standards they use for adopting practices with evidence based outcomes.

Steve Brink of TranSem said their organization is focused on using IPS. TranSem works with a number of challenging mental health cases and has found IPS very helpful in assisting their consumers. He shared that TranSem, working closely with other partners within the community network, have been able to achieve 70 to 90% in jobs using the IPS model. Similar to Robert, he said they have greater confidence in IPS given its design based on compliance within a defined model.

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Other committee observations related to DISCOVERY Process in Minnesota:

- Both schools and counties across Minnesota vary widely on employment services. Some counties and schools are very interested and providing funding specifically for DISCOVERY while others are not. The interest appears to be generated from outside the vocational rehabilitation community.
- Counselors are not experiencing consistent practices from Assessment. There is a wide variety of interpretations on DISCOVERY assessment and communication over the extended time period can be lacking to truly understand what progress is being made towards the employment goal.
- DHS consultation on use of waivers. They are in the process of writing a letter as policy advisory that a letter from VR saying the person is too disabled to benefit from VR services no longer applies.

Check-in Conclusion

Given what we have heard and seen about the qualitative and quantitative experience in VRS and member CRP organizations thus far, we believe there is a need to step up the rigor at the point of handoff from DISCOVERY Assessment to the Placement process and with the Placement/Customized Employment so we can evaluate if, where and how this process makes sense to apply. Simply stated, we need more information to make a determination on its efficacy.

Kim Peck asked the committee for any recommendations they would have for VRS on behalf of the statewide community of providers.

- Recommendation #1: We want to know if it works and for who it works. It would be helpful if VRS can gather more definitive comparative data to answer questions like how long do assessments take? how much does it cost? How much time does it take from date of authorization to placement (first day they go to work)? can we get milestone reports on PBA? what is the staff time? what are the outcomes? Are there any milestones connections to demographics/populations? what demographics and populations does DISCOVERY work for? how many people who finish DISCOVERY return for other services? how many of those consumers using DISCOVERY have used previous services? Jim Leibert and the Program & Service Quality staff will continue gathering and digging into the data to see what we can learn and share.
- Recommendation #2: Keep educating the counselors so we get better referrals. Abbie Wells Herzog will continue to study and promote this recommendation as part of her work with DISCOVERY in Minnesota.

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- Recommendation #3: Consider packaging the placement piece differently. Include the assessment and placement together. Chris McVey and Abbie Wells Herzog will discuss further the potential around this recommendation.
- Recommendation #4: Foster 'Community of Practice' around DISCOVERY: bring providers together with placement specialists to share what they are learning about DISCOVERY applications and outcomes. Abbie Wells Herzog will provide leadership on this recommendation.

♣ Important Messages for the Greater Vocational Rehabilitation Community:

- VRS is responsible for carefully and thoughtfully reviewing various practices for case services investment funding. In the advisory committee's capacity as vocational rehabilitation community thought leaders, today's conversation has provided an opportunity to review the DISCOVERY process which has experienced a recent burst of interest from some counties, schools and advocacy groups across Minnesota.
- After reviewing and sharing the qualitative and quantitative experiences to date, the committee sees DISCOVERY as a 'promising practice' for some consumers. We do not currently see it as a 'best practice' or as an 'evidence based practice'. While Ohio, Texas, Maryland, and Florida are also actively ramping up DISCOVERY process within their vocational rehabilitation services networks, no one has outcomes data to support the prescriptive model that we've been able to identify.
- VRS will continue to gather data in Minnesota to better understand the merits and best application of DISCOVERY process as it relates to making good decisions around resources for helping our consumers to secure competitive employment.